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ART. VIII.—*Narrative of an Expedition to the Source of St Peter's River, Lake Winnepeek, Lake of the Woods, &c. &c; performed in the year 1823, by Order of the Hon. J. C. Calhoun, Secretary of War, under the command of STEPHEN H. LONG, U. S. T. E. Compiled from the Notes of Major Long, Messrs Say, Keating, and Colhoun; by WILLIAM H. KEATING, A. M. &c, Geologist and Historiographer to the Expedition. 2 vols. 8vo. Carey & Lea, Philadelphia, 1824.*

To every citizen, who rejoices in the growth and prosperity of his country, the recent enterprising expeditions into our frontier territories afford matter both of congratulation and regret; of congratulation, that so much has been done with means so small and encouragement so feeble; and of regret, that the national legislature has regarded them with so cold an indifference, and helped them forward with so parsimonious and reluctant a hand. It is mortifying in the extreme for an American to reflect, that while the British government, pursuing an expanded and magnanimous policy, are sending its bands of explorers to every region of the earth, to the heart of central Africa, to India, to the numerous groups of Islands in the Pacific, to South America, to the poles themselves, and even to the borders of our own United States, and thereby extending its name, its power, and its influence to every nation of the globe, and opening channels for an intercourse that will contribute in an unlimited degree to increase its riches and its strength; it is mortifying, we say, to witness these great acts of enterprise and spirit in a foreign country, and then come down to the pitiful contrast exhibited by the doings of our own government; that department of it, we mean, which holds the efficient means of enterprise in its power. Three fifths of our wide possessions are to this day a complete *terra incognita*, of which we know little more than we do of the geographical and political features of Monomotapa, or the arctic domains of the emperor of Russia.

Congress did on one occasion, it must be acknowledged, by some unaccountable impulse of generosity, vote a grant of money to fit out an expedition to the Rocky Mountains. But what was the result? The liberal object itself was nearly defeated, by withholding the necessary funds for the support of

the expedition, at the very time when, after conquering many difficulties, it had reached the point, which promised future success, and when the persons engaged in it had become qualified, by a well earned experience, to accomplish the purposes of the undertaking in a manner as perfect and satisfactory, as could possibly be desired. That men, whose ardor was sufficient to sustain them in opposing every obstacle, and whose intelligence was such as to render them capable of thoroughly investigating every object, that came within their observation, should be permitted to enter upon such an enterprise without the instruments necessary for their researches, and equipments essential to their comfort, or that they should be obliged to travel *against time* with a slight reference to particulars the most important in their tour, and this for the sake of saving a few hundred dollars to the nation, was of all attempts at economy the most ill judged, narrow, and preposterous. Such a spirit is unquestionably at war with the best interests of the country. The treasury of these states, instead of swallowing up, like the thirsty sand, all that is poured into it, should resemble the ocean, which, though the recipient of ten thousand rivers, receives them only to expand a vaster surface, whence their substance may again be withdrawn, and returned in fertilizing showers over the land.

The work, to which we are now called, is another evidence of the zeal and industry of the valuable officer, who, accompanied by some of the same distinguished naturalists, heretofore performed the expedition to the Rocky Mountains, with so much credit to the persons employed, and advantage to the cause of science. Although the present journey was through a country, neither so entirely unexplored, nor so intrinsically rich in natural objects, as that traversed by them on the former occasion, enough has been accomplished to entitle them to much commendation, and impart general interest to the narrative of their labors. When we consider, that they were ordered to perform this journey within eight months, and required not to delay through a winter while on their route, we may well be surprised at the extent and number of their observations.

This will be made the more obvious by presenting, in connexion with a few extracts from these volumes, a general outline of what has been accomplished by the expedition. A sketch of the geography of the country passed over, is

fully and ably drawn by Major Long, in the form of a Report to the Department of War. The regions between the Alleghanies and the Ohio river, and between that river and Lake Michigan, and also the territory northwest of the Great Lakes, which was the more immediate theatre of their observations, are all minutely described. An interesting account is also given of the river St Peter, its source, dimensions, and tributary streams.

We select the following observations on the communication between Lake Superior and Lake Winnepeek.

‘The hydrography of this region is as yet very defective, and although it may be traversed in a thousand directions, must forever remain so, if the shape, magnitude, and position of innumerable lakes embosoming myriads of islands, and the courses, sinuosities, and declivities of countless channels by which they are united, are deemed essential as rudiments of that science. The country is literally a wilderness of lakes, islands, and peninsulas; a mazy waste, so inhospitable and irreclaimable, as to mock the art and enterprize of man, and bid defiance to his industry.

‘The water route most frequented between the Lake of the Woods and Lake Winnepeek, is denominated Winnepeek river, which enters the lake last mentioned in latitude  $50^{\circ} 36' 30''$ , and has an extent of about one hundred and seventy miles. It is composed of a series of deep and broad basins rising one above another, and serving as the channel of a huge volume of water, which is precipitated from one basin to another in tumultuous cataracts of the most romantic character. Of these water falls, there are no less than thirty-one in the route above mentioned, which interrupt the passage of canoes, and at all of which are carrying places. The aggregate descent of water in Winnepeek river may be estimated at four hundred and ten feet, which may be considered as the elevation of the Lake of the Woods above Lake Winnepeek. The route by Covert and Sturgeon Dam rivers is probably the most direct, (the lower portion of which is the same with that above mentioned,) but the obstructions are said to be more numerous and formidable, especially in a low stage of water. Besides these there are numerous other deviations from the main route, some of which have been traversed, but the number that remains to be explored is doubtless far greater.

‘At the distance of about sixty miles below the Lake of the Woods, Winnepeek river receives a large tributary from the north, called English river, which is of a character similar to that of the principal, and nearly as large as the latter above their

junction. Its head waters interlock with those of Albany river, which empties into James' Bay, and is the principal channel of intercourse between Lake Winnepeek and the trading establishments on that river.

'The Lake of the Woods is about seventy-five miles long, and of irregular widths, from ten to thirty-five or forty miles. Compared with other lakes, it deserves a high rank on the scale of beauty. The scenery is wild and romantic in a high degree, its shores being faced with precipices and crowned with hills and knobs of variable heights, clad with a dense foliage of shrubbery and evergreens. Its surface is beautifully studded with countless islands of various sizes and forms, disclosing between them the continued sheet of its wide-spreading waters, the extent of which enlarges upon the vision as the traveller advances upon the lake, till the main land is shut out from the view by the islands that multiply around him.

'The 49th parallel of north latitude crosses the lake, within the distance of about twelve miles from its southerly extremity.

'The region bordering upon the waters above described, is one of the most dreary imaginable. Its climate is rigorous, its surface exceedingly rugged and broken, and its products so limited and meagre, that it seems never to have been claimed as a residence either by man or beast. A solitary moose, caraboo, or bear, is occasionally to be found; and a half-starved family of savages sometimes fix a temporary residence upon some of the water-courses, and subsist miserably upon fish, but it seems as if comfort and competency were denied to both.' Vol. ii. pp. 231—233.

'Above the Lake of the Woods, Rainy river becomes the channel of communication, and extends one hundred miles to the lake of the same name. It has an average breadth of about three hundred yards, is deep and gentle, and has no obstructions to its navigation, within forty-eight miles of its mouth; at this distance are situated the rapids of Rainy river, which are about one mile long, and have an aggregate descent of about ten feet. About ten miles further up is another inconsiderable rapid, with a fall of about three feet. At the outlet of Rainy Lake is a rapid of about five feet descent, and two miles and a half below are the Falls of Rainy river, down which the torrent pours with terrific grandeur through an aggregate descent of twenty-five feet in the distance of but a few yards. At this place are situated an establishment of the Hudson's Bay Company on the north side of the river, and one belonging to the American Fur Company on the south. Twenty miles below the falls is the entrance of a considerable tributary from the southwest called the Grand Fork, which affords a channel of communication between the principal

and Little Winnepeek Lake of the Mississippi, navigable in wet seasons. It receives several other streams of less note. Between the Lake of the Woods and Rainy Lake there is another water route which is sometimes travelled ; it is delineated on the map as the back route.' Vol. ii. p. 234.

On the natural features of the country in a military point of view, Major Long remarks as follows.

' In this view it is proper to comprehend not only the extreme northerly frontier of the United States, but to consider it in connexion with the boundary which nature seems to have fixed as the western limit of our population, viz. the Great American Desert. From what has been stated in relation to the country surrounding Lake Superior and extending north-westwardly to Lake Winnepeek, it may be inferred that we shall always remain secure from the inroads of any hostile force in that direction. Indeed the nature of the country is such, as affords a more formidable barrier to the invasions of an enemy, than any *cordon* of posts that art could devise. This barrier is intercepted by a space of considerable extent, including the valley of Red river, and extending westward to the Great Desert, through which there are two considerable passes, the one by the way of the Red and St Peter rivers, and the other by that of the Assiniboin and Missouri, through which an enemy from the north might gain access to the heart of the western country. But when we consider that the policy of the Hudson's Bay Company, in whom is vested the right of soil to all that part of the British possessions drained by the tributaries of Hudson's Bay, is opposed to the colonization of their territory, their interest prompting them to foster the fur trade, the products of which must diminish in proportion to the increase of population, we have very little to apprehend from the attack of a powerful enemy in that quarter. Added to this the utter impracticability of transporting by ordinary means heavy ordnance, and other munitions of war, up Nelson's river, or by any other route to the valley of Red river, must for a long time to come place an enterprize of this nature beyond the reach of any hostile power. Accordingly, under present prospects, no hostilities are to be apprehended in that part of our frontier, except such as may be inflicted through the medium of the savages. A large portion of the Great American Desert, a sterile dreary waste, three or four hundred miles in width, stretching along the eastern verge of the Rocky Mountains, from Red river of the south to Athabasca in the north, a distance of more than fourteen hundred miles, may be added as a continuation of the line of our natural defence. Thus a portion of our frontier, embracing an

extent of nearly two thousand miles, is so well fortified by nature as to require no artificial structures but such as are appropriate in Indian warfare. No regular military works will of course be required on that extent of frontier, except such as may be required to protect the American fur trade, and counteract the hostile purposes of the Indians.' Vol. ii. pp. 241—243.

The geological observations made by the expedition are mostly new, and very interesting. In beginning their journey they took the opportunity to examine the geology of the state of Pennsylvania west of the Susquehanna, in which region they were the first to remark the existence of primitive formations. They subsequently examined with much care the country near Wheeling and Zanesville. The appearance of the limestone, in the space between Lake Michigan and the Mississippi, led to an attempt to refer these formations to analogous European formations, and though these observations are diffidently offered, they are very interesting. The writer of the expedition has not ventured to decide authoritatively, on a question of so much difficulty, but he has stated his views and motives at large, and shown in what manner the rocks resemble or differ from those observed by Conybeare, Friesleber, Buckland and others. In this part of the route no appearance of lead mines was found.

In relation to the geology of St Anthony, much light has been added to that afforded by Mr Schoolcraft, who had not attempted to show how these rocks were connected with similar ones observed elsewhere. We believe, moreover, that Mr Keating is the first person, who has described from actual observation the nature of the rock on the St Peter; this he has done in the case of the sandstone and limestone, on the lower part of the river, and of the primitive rocks above Patterson's falls, and near the *Lac Qui Parle*.

The first rock, which was afterwards seen *in situ*, was the limestone of Red river, and this, together with the primitive rocks subsequently mentioned, is carefully noted. Superpositions have been traced and described as far as possible, as in the case of the Allegany mountains, of the rocks at Wheeling and Zanesville, on the Wassemos, or west of it, at Fort St Anthony, and the falls, and in various places on Lake Superior. That superpositions were not seen from Lake Winnepeek to Lake Superior is accounted for, by stating that it is doubted whether there is a regular stratification and alter-

nation of rocks, but it is rather held to be an immense, confused, and irregular crystallization, giving rise to many distinct rocks passing into one another. Along the north shore of Lake Superior, traversed by this expedition, no masses of native copper were observed, on the surface of the alluvial matter, but in several places copper pyrites were obtained.

The scenery of the country, which is always nearly and peculiarly connected with its geological characters, deservedly attracted the notice of the expedition, and the descriptions given of it are frequently picturesque and beautiful, deriving a great degree of interest from the peculiar wildness of the country, and the general absence of all animated beings, except the observers themselves.

‘It was at our evening’s encampment,’ says Mr Keating, ‘that the splendid scenery of the Winnepeek first displayed itself to our view, realizing all that the mind could have fancied of wild and sublime beauty, and far surpassing any that we had ever seen. The characters, which we admire in the scenery of the Winnepeek, are the immense volume of waters, the extreme rapidity of the current, the great variety of form which the cascades and falls present, and the incomparable wildness of the rocky scenery which produces these falls, and which contrasts by its gloom, immoveable and unchangeable features, with the bright, dazzling effect of the silvery sheet of water, passing from a smooth and unruffled expanse, to a broken and foaming cataract. It is in the effect of the rocky bed of the Winnepeek, that its numerous falls surpass all other which we have seen; the cataract of Niagara, which far exceeds them in volume, is uniform and monotonous in comparison; the horizontal ledges of secondary rocks of the latter are so far inferior in picturesque effect to the dark water-worn granite and sienite of the former, as the height of the bluffs at Niagara exceeds that of the rocky banks of the Winnepeek.

‘The falls on this river have another advantage, which is, that the whole country has a picturesque appearance, which prepares the mind, and keeps it in a proper disposition to appreciate the splendor of its cataracts, while the country around Niagara is flat, uniform, and uninteresting.’

‘The place of our encampment was characterized by one of those peculiar effects of water, which, once seen, leave an indelible impression upon the mind. After having passed over numerous rocks, which form diversified cascades, (the whole height of which is about thirty feet,) the water is suddenly received into a



basin enclosed by high rocks, where it is forced to sojourn awhile, by the small size of the aperture through which it issues ; here the waters present the characters of a troubled ocean, whose waves rise high and beat against the adjoining shores, and against the few rocky islands which are seen in the midst of this basin ; it is to this character that the spot owes the name which it receives from the natives, "the fall of the moving waters." They may be called the lower falls of Winnepeek river. We reached them in time to watch the beautiful effect of the setting sun, whose beams reflected by the stream imparted to it the appearance of a sea on fire. This was soon replaced by the moon, which cast a more placid light upon the waves, and heightened the charm of the scenery by the melancholy mantle which it spread over it. One of the most imposing characters of these falls is the tremendous noise which they produce, and which, in comparison to their size, is thought to exceed that of Niagara, Montmorency, Schaffhausen, St Anthony, the Cohoes, or other falls which any of our party have ever seen. A scarcity of vegetation covers these rocks and contributes to the picturesque effect of the spot. Instead of the heavy forests which formerly sheltered Niagara, we have here a spare growth of aspen, birch, spruce, and other evergreens, whose size, generally small, adds to the wild and barren appearance of the rocks. The night which we spent near these falls, was one of the most interesting in the expedition ; our tents were pitched so that we had a view of the splendid effect arising from the play of the moonbeams upon the surface of this ocean-like basin, and our eyes were constantly bent upon it until the noise of the cataract lulled us to sleep.' Vol. ii. pp. 90—92.

One important service, rendered by Major Long and his party during the present expedition, is deserving of particular notice. They have pursued their inquiries and examinations in such a manner, as to show that some authors, who have enjoyed an unmerited degree of confidence and reputation, are unworthy of such respect ; not only because they have very frequently depended exclusively on others for the circumstances they relate, but because they have not hesitated to fill up a large part of their outline from imagination alone. This especially applies to La Hontan, or the monk Guedeville, who assumed this name ; and to his humble but ungrateful copyist and garbler, Carver. To be convinced that those, who have been our guides in any research, are unqualified for the office they propose to discharge, may be

disagreeable, but it is an important step towards correcting our errors, and the attainment of truth.

Mr Schoolcraft, who is advantageously known by his travels, and observations on the lead mines of Missouri, has also been corrected in some particulars by the researches of the present expedition. With this we are the more satisfied, as the standing and merited respectability of Mr Schoolcraft are well suited to confer permanency on any accidentally erroneous statement made by him. In relation to the Falls of St Anthony, the narrative of Mr Schoolcraft contains an undeserved censure on the statement of that gallant and praiseworthy officer, Pike, who first correctly reported their height. The latter explorer stated, that the perpendicular height was *sixteen* and a half feet. Mr Schoolcraft magnifies it to *forty feet*. Major Long and Mr Colhoun by different measurements ascertained, that the height was between fifteen and sixteen feet. We do not think it necessary to specify the other topics, on which they differ entirely from Mr Schoolcraft, of whose labors they always speak favorably, and no doubt thought kindly. Corrections of this nature should not give offence to any one, since it is impossible for travelers in all cases to avoid misconception, even where their opportunities for observation have been excellent.

Among the most interesting researches, contained in these volumes, are those relating to the aboriginal inhabitants of the countries adjoining our frontiers. In collecting information on this subject, the gentlemen of the expedition have manifested a very praiseworthy diligence, and their exertions have been rewarded by a large amount of valuable acquisitions. So much misrepresentation has existed in relation to these tribes, and so many falsehoods and exaggerations have been published concerning them, that every authentic observation of their social condition and polity, is of the highest value to the philanthropist and philosopher.

A very interesting account is given, in the second volume, of a white man, by the name of Tanner, who was taken when a child by the Indians, and lived with them till he was advanced in life. This account is too long for an extract, and we recommend it particularly to our readers.

At Piqua, on the Great Miami, about seventy miles west of Columbus, the capital of Ohio, the expedition delayed a short time to examine several of those singular Indian works, which,

usually constructed of earth alone, have resisted the influence of time during many ages, subsequent not only to the extinction of the race by whom they were founded, but long after giant oaks, which have grown from the acorn on their summits, have perished and disappeared through the natural agency of extreme old age and decay. Who reared these works,—for what purpose, or by what means? are questions to which we can reply with nothing better than conjectures, and these in all probability as wide of the truth, as the present time is distant from the era when the mounds themselves were constructed. We have no dates, no tradition to aid us, and our best researches bring us only to the conclusion that they exist, and that powerful and numerous nations have ceased to be. Although these monuments are so simply constructed, they would most probably outlast every other work of human art, since they are secured against the injuries of the seasons by the herbage and trees, which are always found clothing them; but they are now sinking speedily under the hands of civilized men, and must soon be no more. The plough has for many years passed destructively over a great number of elevations, which have witnessed the lapse of centuries unmarred, and a few years only will roll away, before the remaining Indians will become finally extinct, and no trace be left of their existence, or of their ancient greatness.

The melancholy interest, inspired by such considerations, awakens many an unavailing regret relative to the Aborigines, who still continue to linger on the outskirts of the white settlements, apparently incapable of perceiving the advantage of living by the products of their industry, and nurtured in habits which are an effectual barrier to improvement. They are exposed to the artifices of the most depraved of their white neighbors, are taught to debase themselves rather than to improve their condition, and must eventually cease to exist as a people, in the midst of every opportunity to become numerous, refined, and powerful.

It is considered by the writers of this expedition very erroneous, to attribute to all the Indian nations a common character, or to suppose them all alike. It is true that the condition in which they live is sufficient to produce very striking resemblances between them; but there are distinctions as remarkable and important as those to be found in their languages, arising from their division into nations, which, for all

that is known to the contrary, may be descended from different original stocks. Those, which are evidently descended from a common parentage, necessarily present the greatest resemblances, as the Potawatamies, Sauks, Ottowas, and Chippewas, who are all derived from the Algonquin race, while the Dacotas, springing from a different stock, are very different from the rest, both in manners and language. The Indians of Algonquin descent speak dialects of the same tongue, have a family badge, or *totem*, as they call it, and do not worship thunder; and it is believed these tribes are not free from the taint of cannibalism. In all these particulars the manners of the Dacotas exhibit essential differences.

To the distinctions, which are dependent on national causes, superstitions, or traditions, may be added others which spring from local and adventitious circumstances. The Dacotas, for instance, living in a country where bisons are found in abundance, make use of skin lodges, are fond of horses, and obtain them whenever it is possible. The Chippewas, who live in a country of lakes where the birch tree is very common, have ingeniously resorted to the bark of that tree for the material of which to construct their lodges and canoes. That this is not a national, but a local usage, is shown by the fact, that the Killistenos, who are of Algonquin descent, live in a buffalo country, and imitate the Dacotas in the particulars above mentioned, while in respect of language, *totems*, and superstitions, they evince their connexion with the Chippewas.

We have incidentally mentioned, that some of these Indians have a disposition to cannibalism, which has sometimes been considered a shocking imputation on the savage character; nevertheless, the evidence collected by this expedition, added to what is found in other works, would seem to establish the fact on very strong grounds. It is by no means common, however, and is most probably falling into permanent disrepute. Under any circumstances, it is important to be fully assured of the existence of such a trait in the character of these tribes, if it actually exists, however repugnant it may be to our feelings. It seems highly probable, that if the savages of this country had been represented according to their actual condition, and not from the extravagant fancy or misconceptions of travellers, they might at this time have been much further advanced in civilization. That they possess many excellent qualities, and a capacity for improvement,

is not to be doubted; but while they continue to be treated with oppression and injustice, and are taught by repeated experience to regard white men as fraudulent and corrupt, it can scarcely be expected from them, however much it may be desired, that they will arrive at a high elevation either in morals or civil improvements.

The Narrative of the expedition appears to have been carefully composed, and is more uniform than that of the former expedition, but not so interesting. The general style of composition is much elaborated; it is a little too ambitious, abounding in occasional superfluous epithets. These are the faults of one, who has not written much for publication, and may easily be pardoned. A more serious objection to the style, is a too frequent use of technical terms in geology and mineralogy, even in the midst of descriptions, where no allusions to these subjects ought to have been introduced. On the whole, however, Mr Keating has accomplished his task, as historiographer to the expedition, with much good judgment, and with the full measure of industry, which a work of so varied a character required, and he deserves the praise not less of successful authorship, than of skill in his favorite science.

The Appendix contains a treatise extending to one hundred and fifty pages, on various objects of natural history observed in the expedition, by Mr Thomas Say, of the merits of which we do not pretend to speak, being fully convinced that no better pledge of its value can be desired by the public, than the name of the author.

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ART. IX.—*Alcune Osservazioni sull' Articolo Quarto pubblicato nel North American Review, il Mese d' Ottobre dell' Anno 1824.*  
Da L. DA PONTE. Nuova-Jorca. Stampatori Gray e Bunce.  
1825.

THE larger part of the above work is devoted to strictures upon an Article on 'Italian Narrative Poetry,' which appeared in Number XLV of this Journal. The author is an eminent Italian teacher at New York. His poetical abilities have been highly applauded in his own country, and were rewarded with the office of Cæsarean poet at the court of Vienna, where he acquired new laurels as successor to the